

# Dossier Especial "Veinte años de Tradumàtica"

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## Dossier Especial Multimedia #tradumatica20

### Abstract

This commemorative dossier celebrates the twentieth anniversary of *Revista Tradumàtica*. In multimedia format, it brings together contributions from members of the editorial board, prestigious guest experts and authors who have contributed to this journal over the last twenty years. This special issue is an amalgum of contributions organised in parallel activities to celebrate this edition, with the participation of students, lecturers, researchers and professionals from the field of translation and interpreting technologies.

**Keywords:** translation technologies; interpreting technologies, machine translation, neural machine translation, localisation, GILT, documentation, terminology, post-editing, translator and interpreter training, research in translation and interpreting.

## Happy birthday, Tradumàtica!

As a teacher and researcher in the field of translation technologies, as well a practising professional in the language services sector, I am proud to write these lines of congratulations prefacing this dossier commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the birth of the journal *Revista Tradumàtica*.

For me, as I imagine is the case for most of those who read or consult this journal, it has been an essential reference and guide for my translations, classes and reflections over these twenty years. *Tradumàtica*: always up to date with the latest technological developments in our sector as well as what is cooking in academia and the professional world, and always with a keen eye on things to come.

Since its beginnings, I have not passed up the opportunity to recommend this publication to my students, or to boast of my academic, professional and personal links with those who make up the Tradumàtica research group that gave birth to it, and with whom I have spent time during visits to teach localisation classes in the Master's degree: Joan Parra, vaccinating me with the translation technology virus in the Mallorcan restaurant next to the Residence for Researchers in Barcelona's Raval; Adrià Martín, imbuing us with the Sardinian linguistic variant in those summer courses in Cagliari; Ramón Piqué, recalling the origins of office automation software and computer

programming in La Floresta; those still aboard this train (kept on track by a vivacious Pilar Sánchez Gijón and fuelled by the tempered experience of a first-rate editorial board); those still to come and those who have always been behind the scenes (such as Celia Rico with her tireless efforts and contributions). I owe them all my admiration and gratitude.

### The gift

We never know how transcendental the moments we experience are or may be with the passing of time. It is only the perspective gained from hindsight, distance and memory that helps us to assess these moments to a degree that comes as close as possible to what is right.

At the end of the 1980s, recently graduated from the Escuela Universitaria de Traductores e Intérpretes de Granada (along with the UAB EUTI, a pioneering training centre at that time), I was lucky enough to start out as a technical translator in the Dublin suburb of Blackrock; what was Softrans International, later became Berlitz, then Bowne and even later became Lionbridge... As time passed, I realised that I had been localising for years without knowing there was a name for it. Local what?

Since then, I have continued to enjoy the immense good luck of experiencing first-hand the advances in translation and interpreting technologies – in and out of the classroom, in my office in Malasaña and in the meeting rooms of institutions, company offices and the premises of professional associations. My faithful companion *Tradumàtica* has never left me during all this time, telling me and explaining everything that was happening (and to me), like those first issues of *Language International or Multilingual Computing & Technology*.

Today, I have been given the opportunity to co-edit this dossier to symbolically reciprocate how much I have learned over the years. And what a gift it is to participate in this anniversary celebration!

### The party and the guests

The first conversations about this celebration date back to around the end of January 2020, when chatting about bytes and *calçots* in the Bellaterra cafeteria, with Olga, Pilar, Ramón... This was shortly before the Spanish government declared a state of national emergency as the dark clouds of COVID loomed. From March onwards, almost everything stopped for a few pseudo-apocalyptic months that we will remember for the rest of our lives.

Now in 2021, we enthusiastically resumed business remotely (allowing for the odd scare such as the successive waves of pandemic relapses or the cyber-attack on the UAB servers) to analyse the technical and logistical complications with Richard Samson (working from Vic), and present the proposal to the editorial board to finalise details. From the first drafts, they gave us their enthusiastic and unanimous support.

Putting together the guest list for a project as ambitious as this dossier meant performing a balancing act that was not without its risks. We wanted this commemorative issue to include students, lecturers, researchers and professionals: some were making their debut, while those who had already collaborated were asked to revisit their previous publications. To them all we proposed a two-way reflection from the present: towards the past and the future. Without losing sight of the essence or rigour of this journal, we sought to revamp it by incorporating new multimodal formats that were more plural, open, dynamic and accessible, by using social networks to disseminate the activities of this anniversary.

Combining relevance, validity, commitment, availability and a pinch of good luck, we came up with a matrix of topics and experts, which gradually took shape with last-minute withdrawals and additions, and ended up materialising in this new issue that now sees the light of day.

### The birthday cake

As with any birthday party, cutting up the cake into fair portions is no easy task. Most people will want to try it and there will be those who come back for more.

This birthday cake was divided into five slices –each more appetising than the last– in the form of telematic round tables with the participation of prestigious specialists and focused on covering the main fronts of translation and interpreting technologies, inside and outside university, including in the case of Catalan.

Between October and November 2022, five round tables were announced and held to commemorate this anniversary. Chronologically, they were as follows:

- The didactics of translation technologies (#tradumatica20\_didactics 2022), which was held on October 10<sup>th</sup>, moderated by Diana González Pastor (University of Valencia), with Debbie Folaron (Concordia University), Marcos Cánovas (University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia) and Óscar Jiménez Serrano (University of Granada).
- Research in the field of translation technologies (#tradumatica20\_research 2022), which was held on October 17<sup>th</sup> and moderated by Ricardo Muñoz Martín (University of Bologna), with Christian Olalla Soler (University of Bologna), Miguel Ángel Jiménez Crespo (Rutgers University), Pilar Sánchez Gijón (Autonomous University of Barcelona) and Vanessa Enríquez Raído (University of Auckland).
- Prospects for the evolution of translation technologies (#tradumatica20\_perspectives 2022), which was held on October 24<sup>th</sup>, moderated by Pilar Sánchez Gijón (Autonomous University of Barcelona), with Jörgen GREN (European Commission) and Mikel Forcada (University of Alicante).
- Interrelations between Catalan and language technologies (#tradumatica20\_catalan 2022), which was held (also in face-to-face mode) on October 26<sup>th</sup>, moderated by Olga Torres Hostench (Autonomous University of Barcelona), with Jordi Mas (Softcatalà), Marta Villegas (National Supercomputing

Centre of Barcelona) and Pilar Sánchez Gijón (Autonomous University of Barcelona).

- The role of translation technologies in the market – and vice versa – (#tradumatica20\_market 2022), which was held on November 7<sup>th</sup>, moderated by Manuel Mata Pastor (Complutense University of Madrid), with Carla Parra Escartín (RWS), Daniel Marín Buj (Translation Centre of the Bodies of the European Union), Jose Palomares (Coupa Software) and Juan José Arevalillo (Hermes Servicios Lingüísticos).

There were speakers from both national and international backgrounds, from both public and private bodies, from the university, institutional, professional and business spheres, representing various sectors but with the common denominator of translation and interpreting technologies.

The intersections between the five round tables were as inevitable as they were obvious, as was the enriching contrast of opinions, at times contradictory or even polemical, but always thought-provoking and enlightening. Three articles in this dossier summarise the issues addressed and the conclusions reached in each of the three virtual meetings devoted to didactics, research and perspectives.

In her article in this dossier on teaching translation technologies, Diana González Pastor summarises the issues raised at the round table she moderated. These concern the repercussions of the technological transformation for the translation sector in general and the major presence of machine translation in particular for training translators and interpreters, as well as the new professional profiles that have arisen as a result. Revising and adapting syllabi will make it easier for students and teachers to take on and learn to cope with this new reality without detracting from the expert role of the human versus the machine or from the progressive acquisition of skills adapted to a constantly changing professional environment.

With regard to research into translation and interpreting technologies, Vanessa Enríquez Raído's reflects the opinions expressed at the round table on research, which also highlighted the importance of the human factor and the interaction between people and machines. In times of change such as these, research has focused – and is likely to continue to focus – on recent advances, in particular with regard to machine translation and the role of artificial intelligence, and also the evaluation of new systems and the analysis of the inherent challenges and risks. At this round table, emphasis was placed on the need to continue studying both the technological literacy process related to the mechanisation of translation and interpreting and the matching of new professional profiles to the changing landscape of language automation technologies.

Regarding perspectives on the evolution of translation studies, Celia Rico Pérez looks back over the major milestones in translation and interpreting technologies over the last twenty years published in *Tradumàtica*, before looking to the future. This difficult prospective exercise is only likely to be successful if attention is paid to the current state of technological advances. Among other burning issues these include: the architecture of machine translation transformers, the appearance of new standards

and the rethinking of existing ones, automation and cooperation in terminology management and extraction, the irruption of automation and its consequences in audiovisual translation and interpreting. Only in this way can an ecosystem be conceived in which the interrelationship between people and computers is reconceptualised so that the now augmented and automated artificial intelligence is at the service of human intelligence, now collective and agglutinating, in a symbiotic rather than parasitic relationship.

At the round table dedicated to Catalan, Marta Villegas (from the National Supercomputing Centre in Barcelona) explained the projects in progress on machine translation, voice recognition (the [AINA project](#)) and other natural language processing techniques. Pilar Sánchez Gijón (as director of the journal) recalled the members of *Tradumàtica*'s editorial team since its beginnings and reviewed, in chronological order, the topics that have been dealt with issue after issue. Jordi Mas (from Softcatalà) then spoke about the relationship between technologies and languages in the case of Catalan, and the congruence between the Tradumàtica Master's degree and some of its graduates.

There was a strong institutional flavour to this round table, which had the double role of inaugurating the 2022-23 academic year and commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of translation and interpreting studies at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The event was attended by the Vice-Rector for International Relations and Language Policies (Màrius Martínez Muñoz), the Dean of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (Olga Torres Hostench) and the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission representative in Barcelona (Mireia Martínez Bou), the institution that sponsored the event as part of the series of activities included in the [Translating Europe Workshops](#) project.

At the translation market-focused round table, Manuel Mata Pastor questioned his audience on the milestones that have marked the development of the GILT services market: from the universalisation of microcomputing with the appearance of the personal computer to the paradigm shift forced by the unstoppable irruption of neural translation or the surprising experiments in automatic dubbing using deep faking techniques; the modernisation and migration to the cloud of computer-assisted translation and project management systems (with the well-known toll of a functional regression in performance); the implementation of specialised exchange formats and the industrialisation of post-editing, after overcoming a tenuous generational reluctance to its definitive integration into business and institutional workflows. There was no shortage of explicit – and, at times, critical – references to the current set up in our sector, after a pandemic that is still very much present (a blessing in disguise, by improving ubiquity and reconciling personal and family dimensions; in short, our quality of life thanks to the generalised use of working via the Internet). All of this at an economic, geopolitical and climatic juncture that is as uncertain as it is distressing, with demand that continues to grow exponentially on all fronts of economic, commercial, industrial and leisure activity, and which inevitably brings with it greater pressure on prices and deadlines.

The participants in this roundtable contrasted their professional experiences in the commercial and institutional fields. On the one hand, they discussed the challenges posed by new services, needs and profiles, not only from a technical or professional but also ethical points of view, such as training systems, optimising workflow, constant evaluation of results through the recalibration of metrics, feedback and error tracking. On the other hand, they updated views concerning old debates on the objectification of quality versus fit-for-purposeness, redesigning cost and profit structures, the necessary readjustment of the value chain, the alleged uberization of the market and the inevitable discussion on the working conditions of service providers or on some questionable business practices.

The round table reached optimistic conclusions, reiterating the promising job prospects arising from the demand for new tasks somewhere between linguistic and technological, thanks to the re-qualification of traditionally linguistic profiles, and by revaluing the human factor, with a human in the loop (HITL) that, far from disappearing, replaced by machines, is still clearly indispensable, even though adapting to the new times is needed with a decided change of attitude based on flexibility, curiosity, the desire to experiment and, obviously (albeit to a lesser extent) skills in translation technologies.

In addition to the three summaries mentioned above (Pastor, Enríquez and Rico), for those who did not have the chance to taste this birthday cake at the time, and for those who did but would like to go back for more, the complete recordings of the five round tables have been included in this dossier, subtitled – with transcription or translation, accordingly – in Spanish, Catalan and English.

A total of 320 recordings were made at these five events: 57 at the didactics round table, 72 at the research round table, 84 at the perspectives round table, 33 at the Catalan round table, and 74 at the round table dealing with the translation market. Such was the interest aroused by the questions raised by the moderators, panellists and attendees that the initially planned duration of 90 minutes was exceeded in almost all the sessions.

### Ballons and candles

To rejuvenate the magazine on its twentieth anniversary, we reduced its symbolic candles to half plus one of the twenty [?] and wanted to blow them out in the company of anyone who studies, teaches, works or researches in the field of translation technologies, or simply has an interest in the exciting world of translation and interpreting technologies.

Between mid-September and October, with the halfway point marked by International Translation Day and the celebration of Saint Jerome, we launched 11 coloured balloons into the social media atmosphere in the form of questions (mainly via the magazine's Twitter account, @RevTradumatica). Suggestive, intriguing, inspiring or challenging, the 11 questions sparked interest and participation, which amounted to a total of 164 responses, of which we received 96 (59 %) in writing and 68 (41



%) in video format, i.e. an average of 15 responses to each of the 11 questions posed. Our thanks to the authors of these responses are recorded in the respective articles analysing them, and we would like to reiterate our gratitude to them in this editorial.

The proposals came from the heart of *Tradumàtica's* editorial board, which issued an open invitation to blow out these eleven virtual candles. They were intended to cover, in a natural and fresh manner, topical or interesting issues with the intention of complementing the more formal debates raised in the round tables and thus enriching this plural commemorative issue.

The distillation of the pills was carried out by members of the editorial board of and other renowned guest experts from our field or other neighbouring fields. From an effervescent present and with translation and interpreting technologies as protagonists, they analyse in a dozen recapitulative works how and how much our sector has evolved over the last 20 years, people, machines and the interaction between the two. This analysis covers perspectives as disparate as they are complementary; some, looking back, others, looking to the future.

In these choral syntheses, which have arisen from generous and spontaneous contributions and are published in this dossier in the form of multimedia articles, we address, respectively, topics as varied as the most sought-after technological profiles in the market (Amparo Alcina); the most representative articles published by the magazine between 2001 and 2021, in the twenty editions that have seen the light of day, from issue 0 to 19 (Pilar Cid and Pilar Sánchez Gijón); the evolution of translation technologies in the classroom in these two decades (Marcos Cánovas); the cyber-symbiosis of technology and biology in the figure of the translator-cyborg (Olga Torres Hostench); the evolution of our desktop and our way of translating and documenting in the last 30 years (Ricardo Muñoz Martín); the role of accessibility and technology in audiovisual translation (Juan Pedro Rica Peromingo); the outlook for the evolution of translation technologies in the short and medium term (Pilar Sánchez Gijón); the (in)visibility of machine translation in audiovisual products (Estella Oncins); the controversial marriage between the face-to-face and the telematic in simultaneous interpreting after the pandemic (Óscar Jiménez Serrano); and the trivialisation of machine translation services outside the professional sphere (David Orrego-Carmona).

The above articles are accompanied by trilingual videos (in Spanish, Catalan and English) in which all the answers received have been assembled. In each audiovisual piece, the written answers appear on screen while they are reproduced by means of voice synthesis; those received in multimedia format have been transcribed by means of voice recognition complemented by human review and the resulting transcriptions automatically translated from each language into the other two without human intervention. Apart from the plurality and diversity of these contributions (from different latitudes and environments) and the unquestionable interest of their content (more accessible in this multimodal format), giving a face and a voice to many of the translation technology names is undoubtedly an added attraction.

In short, this is a monographic yet plural dossier, both in its initial focus as well as its content and presentation, which aims to give closure to the commendable task of 20 years devoted to observing, analysing and sharing what is happening in the field of translation and interpreting technologies and adjacent fields. As a culmination to celebrating its twentieth anniversary, *Tradumàtica* has recently been recognised with the first quartile (Q1) of the prestigious SJR index (Scimago Journal & Country Rank).

May we continue learning with you and may you have many happy returns, *Revista Tradumàtica*.

### Acknowledgements

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